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A Deluge of Criticism Hits Agricultural R&D

Incitement to another political tantrum by the long-coddled agricultural-research system is on the way in a forthcoming report from a shake-'em-up strategy conference on agricultural science co-sponsored in June by the White House Science Office and the Rockefeller Foundation.

The final and public version of the report will be softened a good deal to avoid a total breakdown by the mandarins of ag's pork-barrel feudalism, several of whom are persuaded that the solution to their difficulties lies in firing one or another participant in the conference. Toward that end, they have been shamelessly pulling wires at high and low political levels, but so far without effect.

House Committee Votes Boost In Science Foundation Funds—Page 5

Meanwhile, SGR believes it would be useful to make public the major points of the original, unsanitized draft of the conference report, a copy of which was provided to us by a source overlooked in ag's last round of witch hunting. The following is based on that document, which reflects the deliberations of the 14 scientists, administrators, plus a few others—all mainstream types—who attend the conference (see SGR Vol. XII, No. 10 for a complete list) June 14-15 at the Winrock Conference Center, Morrilton, Arkansas.

Noting that "Institutional inertia from a century of tradition and stability limits the ability and willingness of the traditional agricultural-research institutions to achieve needed adaptation and change," the original draft of the report cites "excessive parochialism and preoccupation with institutional protection and maintenance." These and other factors, it continues, have produced "a level of institutional paranoia and inter-institutional bickering that almost completely precludes any rational attention to needed change within institutions and within the agricultural research system..."

Proceeding with its indictment of the system, the report states that "there is a critical lack of high quality, perceptive leaders of national stature in agricultural research (and) it is unclear, both within and without the system, who represents and can speak for the components of the agricultural research system, particularly the state experiment stations. The resulting leadership vacuum leaves agricultural research with inadequate, confused, and often contradictory representation at the national level during a critical period..."

The research system, the report continues, operates without a sense of scientific priorities, and "As a result, we lack crucial, fundamental knowledge about the biology of the organisms on which the future of American agriculture depends. With a widely held poor reputation for scientific quality, agriculture faces "a reluctance at the federal level to increase funding for research....Federal funding and top scientific talent are increasingly going to institutions, outside the [agriculture] system, conducting cutting-edge basic science...."

The report adds that the system appears to be unable "to address truly national issues and how they impact, or are impacted by, international food and agriculture dynamics." Part of the problem, it says, originates in the necessarily localized nature of the state experiment

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In Brief

The House Appropriations Committee has rapped the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy for its share of the old flim-flam that makes the Presidential payroll look leaner than it really is. While the budget for OSTP keeps going down, the Committee observed, the staff keeps getting bigger. The trick is to charge off staff to some other agency's payroll, a tactic that now accounts for 21 of 27 staffers at the Office. The Committee sliced $261,000 from the $1.5 million requested for OSTP and directed an end to the phantom payroll by next March.

Two million dollars for a study of military and intelligence needs in foreign-area and language studies have been earmarked for the Army by the House and Senate Armed Services committees. The study, with emphasis on the Soviet Union, is supposed to be delivered in March.

The Bristol-Myers Company has announced plans to minimize the use of experimental animals in its own labs and in testing performed for the company by outside organizations. As part of the program a non-animal assay will be used for one test that now uses 350 to 375 rabbits a year, and the company is examining methods of using hearts from slaughtered animals for cardiovascular tests that require up to 250 dogs or pigs per year.

...Shake-up Urged for ARS Laboratories

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stations, but part is also attributed to a US Department of Agriculture "which lacks real leadership and which maintains a laboratory system whose mission has become diffuse and whose myriad facilities around the country lack needed problem-focused cohesion."

The report contains a slew of negative observations about the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), the Department's own in-house research system:

Its "research capability and quality...are perceived to have declined in recent years as the ARS mission has become diffuse and basic food production research has been de-emphasized in favor of more applied research and development oriented toward consumer interests.

"Political interests," the report continues, "have been responsible for the establishment and retention of a large number of field sites and major facilities not justifiable in terms of research needs or efficient allocation of scarce resources. Personnel ceilings have largely thwarted efforts to bring in bright, young talent, reducing the influx of new ideas and methods and increasing the average age of the ARS scientific staff. Administrative rigidity lessens the ability of ARS managers to control funding and human resources as to induce constructive change."

While endorsing long-term funding for the stability and predictability that it provides agricultural-research organizations, the report recommends that "All new ARS funds, above and beyond inflation," should come "from various sources of competitive grants." In addition, the "Research centers of excellence should be established through reorganization and consolidation of existing activities and facilities," and each ARS facility should be examined with an eye to one of four options: (1) "Retention as a federal ARS research facility with changed roles and responsibilities consistent with the mission of a strengthened ARS." (2) A transition to state ownership "with federal funding continued for a specified period, on a declining basis." (3) Sale "to a public or private university or to industry," or (4) "close."

Furthermore, the report recommends, "Rigorous peer review of proposed scientific programs, ongoing research, and individual scientist performance must be made an integral and routine part of ARS research management."

As for the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS), the federal agency that links the Agriculture Department and the State Agricultural Experiment Stations, the report is also highly critical. Instead of providing leadership and coordination, it states, CSRS is "largely devoted to administration and oversight of formula funds. As a result, the federal-state dialog increasingly focuses on budgetary and administrative matters instead of on substantive ones." CSRS, it continues, should get out of the money-minding business and, instead, should provide "intellectual leadership" for the state institutions, including coordination of multi-state research programs, illumination of regional and national research needs, and collection and dissemination of "up-to-date, accurate information on agricultural research in progress."

The report is not significant for its substance—similar points are contained in recent reports by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment and the General Accounting Office, among others. Rather, it is significant because it emanates from an appendage of the White House and it dovetails with newly rising Congressional concerns about the condition and potential of agricultural research.

Those Congressional concerns most recently went public at the end of July when the House Committee on Science and Technology's Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment drew a pathetic response from the Department of Agriculture at hearings on research. Part of the problem was that the longtime chief of Ag science and education, Anson R. Bertrand, has gone off to the Agency for International Development after the Reagan Administration froze him out of any useful role in the Department.

Testifying at the hearing as Acting Assistant Secretary for Science and Education was a temporary replacement, Terry B. Kinney Jr., who is otherwise the Ad-

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Witnesses Assail Quality, Aims of Ag R&D

The following excerpts are from testimony July 27 before the House Science and Technology Committee's Subcommittee on Natural Resources, Agriculture Research and Environment.

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Michael J. Phillips, Director, Office of Technology Assessment's Food and Agricultural Research Assessment Staff:

Today the food and agricultural research system can be described as being in disarray. A need exists for some degree of relatedness among the research participants—particularly between the State Agricultural Extension Stations (SAES) and USDA. Improved leadership is essential. USDA, designated by Congress as lead Agency for food and agricultural science, is central to the research effort. USDA is directly involved in acquisition and distribution of Federal funds to the States, other research institutions, and its own in-house research. It coordinates with other Federal agencies and comes closer to perceiving the broad public interest than does any other segment of the research system.

However, research continues to lack prominence within USDA as witnessed by minimal real research funding increases, a continuing decrease in the number of positions assigned to agricultural research, and the lack of young scientists in the organization. Scientists 50 years of age or older account for almost 50 percent of all ARS scientists, whereas those 30 years of age or younger account for only 2 percent. NIH, in comparison, has only 15 percent of its scientists 50 years of age or older, and about 25 percent 30 years of age or younger.

SAES prefers a loose, voluntary, cooperative type of guidance from Washington, with few, if any, strings attached. However, leadership and coordination of the research system must be exercised if the system is to appear to Congress as something other than bureaucratic self-seekers.

Denis J. Prager, Assistant Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy:

The research-education coalition, which once dominated the agricultural scene, has largely been replaced by a large number of special interest groups representing commodity, consumer, agribusiness, and specialized farm interests with little or no concern for research issues. The "farm bloc" which once controlled Congress has largely disappeared as the country has become urbanized. And, the USDA has long since lost its primary focus on research and education, as its political attention has been diverted to providing direct economic benefits to a specific set of farmer and business interests.

As a result of these changes, the federal role in agricultural research has become less clear. The land-grant institutions question the federal commitment to the federal-state partnership, as growth of formula funds to the states has levelled off. The mission of the USDA labs is diffuse and the quality of their research uneven. The federal role in providing scientific and intellectual leadership has largely been abrogated....

I believe that much of the current concern over the future of agricultural research is based on the perception that the system is preoccupied with the past, clinging to tradition while fighting change and avoiding adaptation....

In general, I expect little in the way of real substantive progress in advancing science and technology from formal, centralized planning. It is my contention that the agricultural community expends more time, effort, and travel funds on needs identification, priority setting, and budget and program planning than most other areas of science combined, with precious little to show for it....

William E. Gahr, Associate Director, Community and Economic Development Division, General Accounting Office:

Most of the agriculture research planning that is done is not national long-range planning and no rationale for such planning has been developed. Current planning efforts primarily involve short-term or operational planning.

USDA has attempted to set goals for USDA-conducted research, has done long-range planning for individual inhouse research topics, and has developed operational plans for inhouse research, but these efforts have not resulted in a national long-range plan.

A number of factors inhibit national long-range planning. These include (1) a general belief by agricultural scientists that long-range planning is a "luxury" and cannot be afforded; (2) concern by the States that a stronger USDA research planning effort would eventually lead to Federal planning and control of State research operations; and (3) frequent changes in departmental leadership with limited executive interest and guidance in long-range planning.

We concluded that it was unlikely that national long-range planning efforts for agricultural research and development can be immediately undertaken given the inhibiting factors facing the system.

..."Not Doing the Job that Could be Done"

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ministrator for Agricultural Research.

Questioned closely by Chairman James D. Scheuer (D-NY), Kinney was obliged to defend what he wasn't responsible for—the USDA's arrogant indifference to a pile of serious, disinterested studies that all conclude that the agricultural-research enterprise is weak and deteriorating.

"Can you give me an indication as to which [USDA] entities are examining these reports and as to when they will have some kind of assessment?" Scheuer asked, adding, "Aren't you doing any independent rethinking about the meaning of these reports for the national agricultural research effort and the role that your department should be playing?"

"Yes, we have," Kinney replied.

"Give us the results of your thinking," Scheuer said.

In response, Kinney cited what he said was "a good example"—an increase in consultations and exchanges of information among agricultural scientists. But, he insisted, it wasn't possible, within the time since the reports had been issued, "to revolutionize the total planning, priority setting...."

Scheuer appeared unimpressed, and later reiterated that "I'm trying to find out whether you people at the top level of the Department of Agriculture" are taking "the drumbeat of criticism seriously."

"There's quite a consensus," Scheuer went on, "that you're not doing the job that could be done....Before you're going to convince the executive branch...and the Congress that you need more funding, you're going to have to show that some thoughtful consideration has taken place....Is this consideration going on anywhere in your office or in the top level of the Department of Agriculture?" Scheuer again asked Kinney.

Kinney replied that each report had received an "official" answer from the Department, but had little to offer in response when Scheuer asked, "How are you using these reports, what lessons have you learned...?"

The Subcommittee Chairman and the Acting Assistant Secretary thus went round and round, with everyone well aware of the fact that the Department and its allies in agricultural research have traditionally regarded outside criticism as a nuisance that can be safely ignored.

The system, of course, is not monolithic. There's a wing in the Department that strongly favors the competitive grants that are abhorred by the formula-loving backward institutions in the research enterprise. And, at the more scientifically enlightened land-grant universities, competitive grants and so-called cutting-edge science are recognized as desirable features in an otherwise creaky system. Nonetheless, as the oldest big-league research enterprise in the federal system, agricultural research has had well over a century to settle into comfortable habits, form highly advantageous political alliances, and happily exist in a non-competitive, live-and-let-live atmosphere.

While skeptics scoff at the possibility of change, the fact is that elements favorable to change are mounting up. The Reagan goal, as enunciated by Science Advisor George A. Keyworth, of pruning deadwood from the R&D enterprise, has gained influential support within the scientific community. Whereas the elders of the system formerly insisted that more money is the only solution to the financial needs of science, they've now recognized that in the Reagan era, the only feasible way to keep the enterprise thriving is by cutting back on low-quality research and shifting the savings to topflight activities.

That's the line that Frank Press, President of the National Academy of Sciences, took in June when he publicly praised Keyworth for having "the courage to tackle these very difficult and politically dangerous issues of evaluation and reorganization and reallocation in order to put money into the best scientific institutions, the best people in the country" (SGR Vol. XII, No. 12).

Also presaging change in the politics of agricultural research is the erosion of power in the old farm bloc. It's not what it used to be in terms of seniority and votes, and its most powerful figure in Congress, Rep. Jamie L. Whitten (D-Miss.), is 72. Soon to run for his 21st term, Whitten presides over agricultural affairs as Chairman of the full Appropriations Committee and Chairman of its Subcommittee on Agriculture. Powerful he is, but not as powerful as he used to be, as is clear from numerous reverses that farm interests have suffered in the current session.—DSG

Security Report Due Soon

The National Academy of Sciences' Panel on Scientific Communication and National Security now expects to wind up its study with a final report around the end of September. The original schedule called for an interim report in mid-September and a final report at the end of the year.

Chaired by Dale R. Corson, President-emeritus of Cornell University, the panel was commissioned by Academy President Frank Press to examine allegations that the Soviets are helping themselves to valuable scientific information in American universities. If it turns out that the panel has anything decisive to say, its report is likely to have a good deal of influence on policy developments in this area.

NSF Spared the Budget Knife on Capitol Hill

The National Science Foundation budget, usually a reliable barometer of Congressional support for science, has recently fared quite well at two critical points in the appropriations process.

On August 10, the House Appropriations Committee reported out a bill that would provide the Foundation with $1.1 billion for Fiscal 1983, which begins October 1. That amount would raise the current annual budget by $115 million, compared to the Administration's request for a boost of only $75 million.

One week later, the Senate Appropriations Committee finished work on a bill that accepted the Administration's figures. What that means is that, at least in constant dollars, NSF will not undergo the budgetary backsliding that many federal agencies face next year; with a bit of luck, NSF might even experience some of that cherished "real" growth.

The big difference between the worked-over bill from the Democratically controlled House and the rubberstamped version from the Republican Senate is concentrated in the politically touchy area of science education and special science programs for women and minorities.

While the Reagan Administration has been hacking away at a federal role in those areas, the Democrats, sensing grass-roots despair about the plight of science in the schools, see political gain in opposing the Administration's pennypinching. Thus, where the White House budget would confine NSF's education role to a $15-million item for graduate fellowships, the House Appropriations committee, in its report on the bill, called for adding another $25 million to "be applied to precollege teacher training, public understanding and research in science education programs, undergraduate science education programs, and enhanced opportunities for minority participation in the sciences." The report urges that "the women and minority science education programs and graduate fellowships...be given a high priority," and goes on to state:

"Last year, the Committee stated its belief that the Administration's decision to eliminate entirely the [NSF] science education program was shortsighted. That position has only been reinforced in the past twelve months. Unless the Foundation implements a new comprehensive science education program soon, the United States will fall permanently behind in science education and national productivity. The Committee believes that this nation is faced with the specter of pervasive science illiteracy. That trend must be reversed, and it urges that a new approach to science education be adopted as soon as possible."

The House Appropriations bill also added $9 million for the Foundation to spend, at its discretion, on the "highest priority activities" within the NSF directorates responsible for biological, behavioral and social sciences and international affairs. It also specified that in allocating that money, "special attention" should be given to providing research equipment for two- and four-year colleges.

While total funds in the Senate bill match the Administration's request, there's one major reallocation—a cut of $15 million from the request for the NSF-supported Antarctic Program, with a recommendation that the money be applied to basic research.

Tradition calls for the House and Senate to split the difference when money bills don't match up. But it might not be easy in the case of the NSF bills, given that the House version accuses the Administration of fostering "pervasive science illiteracy."

When charges along those lines were addressed to the Administration earlier this year, it simply stonewalled and said that the future of science education was under study by a commission of the National Science Board (SGR Vol. XII, No. 8). Since then, however, it has become plain that ordinary folks out there are worried that their children are getting shortchanged in science instruction, and, in turn, a flock of bills are circulating around Capitol Hill for restoring a major federal role in science education, particularly at pre-college levels.

With election day just two months away when Congress returns from summer recess to take on a big backlog of legislative duties, it is not unlikely that the NSF appropriations will be still be in the mill when the new fiscal year commences. In that case, the education

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Science Writers on the Move

An unusually large number of job shifts have occurred in recent months among the small band of reporters who cover science-policy affairs in Washington.

Robert Reinhold, of the *New York Times* bureau, has been reassigned to the paper's Houston bureau. He's succeeded in Washington by Philip M. Boffey, who recently shifted from the *Times'* editorial board to the science-news staff. Boffey's slot on the editorial board has been filled by Nicholas Wade, of *Science* magazine's News and Comment staff.

Meanwhile, David Dickson, who recently resigned from *Nature* magazine's one-man Washington bureau, has settled in Paris, where he will write on European science policy for *Science* and other publications.

Dickson's place in Washington has been taken by Deborah Shapley, formerly of *Science* News and Comment. She has since been joined at the *Nature* bureau by Stephen Budiansky, formerly of the American Chemical Society.

Biomedical Researchers OK Lobbying Drive

The biomedical-research community has decided to carry out what is likely to be the biggest overt public-relations campaign ever organized in behalf of science: A nearly year-long, professionally led nationwide effort "to heighten public awareness of the benefits of biomedical and behavioral research in society."

Masterminding the campaign, scheduled to get underway at the beginning of 1983, is the Washington-based lobby for the nation's medical schools, the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). According to AAMC President John A.D. Cooper's weekly report to members, the go-ahead decision on the long-contemplated campaign was made after an "overwhelmingly favorable" response was received from some 130 academic medical societies and voluntary health groups that were asked to participate. Cooper said that the AAMC has hired Burson-Marsteller, a national public relations firm, "to assist in developing a public relations strategy and the assemblage of materials to be used in solicitation of funds to support the campaign."

Present plans call for providing medical schools and teaching hospitals with "core public relations materials" for local and regional propagandizing. The campaign is expected to wind up in the fall of 1983 with what AAMC hopes will be a presidential or congressional proclamation of a National Medical Research Month.

Meanwhile, the social scientists, having had their political minds wondrously concentrated by Mr. Reagan's early-term effort to exclude them from the National Science Foundation budget, continue to carry on their survival efforts through the Consortium of Social Science Associations (1755 Massachusetts Ave. Nw., Washington, DC 20036; tel. 202/234-5703).

A huddle of 10 social-science organizations, the Consortium attentively monitors professionally relevant activities on Capitol Hill and elsewhere in Washington. One of its latest, and probably most useful, items for the membership is a brief and straightforward list of "Suggestions for Telephoning a Member of Congress," starting with the Capitol switchboard numbers and the recommendation that "Once connected, ask to speak with 'the staff person who handles sciences and technology issues for the Congressman (or Senator).'"

Then, "Once connected to the right person," the suggestion sheet continues, "identify yourself first as a constituent, then as a professional. Try to say something positive about the Member or Senator before asking for his or her support on a specific issue."

Some oldtimers may consider it unseemly for scholarly disciplines to employ blatant lobby techniques. But in the budget-cutting atmosphere that now dominates Washington, silence can be tantamount to suicide.

In Print

State Activities to Encourage Technological Innovation, An Update, 92 pages, a state-by-state inventory, compiled for the National Governors Association by the Office of the Governor of California, briefly describes programs, lists budgets, and provides names, addresses, and phone numbers of people in charge. Only a limited number available—no charge—from: Ms. E. Allison Thomas, Executive Director, California Commission on Industrial Innovation, 1120 N St., Suite 2101, Sacramento, Calif. 95814; tel. 916/324-0401.

Research Organization and Science Promotion in the Federal Republic of Germany, by Hildegard and Reinhold Geimer, a concise and comprehensive English-language review of the organization of German scientific activities, including descriptions of major research institutions and details on programs and expenditures; 197 pages, $16 per copy, discount for quantity orders; published by K G Saur, Munich, New York, etc., available by mail order from The Shoe String Press, PO Box 4327, 995 Sherman Ave., Hamden, Conn. 06514; attn. Mrs. Emily Frei.

"Major Private Organizations in the Population Field," an inventory of some 40 US and foreign philanthropic, educational, and research organizations concerned with population problems, plus a list of national and international agencies and major academic centers that are involved with the subject. This information is contained in *Population* (Briefing Paper No. 10), available without charge from the Population Crisis Committee, 1120 19th St. Nw., Washington, DC 20036.

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BUDGET

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issues will effectively be put on ice, pending passage of the bill or some special legislative action concerning particular features of it.

Last year, NSF didn't get its appropriations bill until two days before Christmas. But that's nothing compared to the National Institutes of Health. Since 1976, when Congress put new budget procedures into operation, only one NIH appropriations measure has made it through the annual legislative mill. In the absence of final passage, year after year, NIH has existed on continuing resolutions that provide for doing it next year the way it did it last year, except for specially approved items.

Here's the Top 20 in Academic R&D Funds

Institution	(Dollars in millions) TOTAL FY 1980	TOTAL Percent change, FY 1979-80	FEDERAL FY 1980	FEDERAL Percent change, FY 1979-80
Total, all institutions	$6,049	13%	$4,093	14%
Total, leading 20 institutions	2,172	13	1,646	13
1. Johns Hopkins University	[1]253	7	[1]240	7
2. MIT	164	16	138	14
3. University of Wisconsin-Madison	138	13	89	14
4. University of California-San Diego	125	16	111	15
5. University of Minnesota	119	12	68	12
6. Stanford University	113	11	103	12
7. University of Washington	112	13	93	12
8. University of Michigan	111	4	76	12
9. Cornell University	108	7	71	5
10. Columbia University	101	22	84	25
11. Harvard University	[2]101	13	76	13
12. University of Pennsylvania	94	15	71	20
13. University of California-Berkeley	90	20	64	20
14. University of California-Los Angeles	89	18	70	17
15. University of Illinois-Urbana	83	10	52	17
16. University of Texas at Austin	79	13	49	7
17. University of Southern California	74	26	50	14
18. University of California-San Francisco	73	20	61	19
19. Michigan State University	72	15	35	25
20. Pennsylvania State University	72	12	45	10
Total, all other institutions	$3,877	13	$2,446	14

[1]Includes Applied Physics Laboratory. SOURCE: National Science Foundation
[2]Estimate.

The major research universities have been maintaining reasonably healthy financial growth for their R&D activities, according to the latest figures from the National Science Foundation. They're a bit out of date, but 18 months of Reagan actually haven't altered the trends significantly.

Covering fiscal years 1979 to 1980 (which ended September 30, 1980) the NSF compilations show that federal support for academic R&D rose in that period by 14 percent, which works out to a "real" increase of 5 percent. As for basic research, NSF reports support went up by a real 3 percent in that one-year period, and that "Since 1975, annual increases in Federal support have raised the constant-dollar level of basic research spending in higher education institutions over previous constant-dollar highs. Thus, the 1980 constant-dollar level stood 18 percent above the 1974 level which, until 1979 had been the peak year."

One hundred universities received 84 percent of all federal funds for R&D in universities; the top 20 accounted for 36 percent.

(These data are from a four-page summary, NSF 82-309, based on statistical tables contained in an NSF report, *Academic Science: R&D Funds, Fiscal Year 1980,* NSF 82-309. Both the summary and the report are available without charge from NSF, Division of Science Resources Studies, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550).

IN PRINT *(Continued from page 6)*

Emerging Issues in Science and Technology, 1981, a characteristically bland product of one of those mob efforts orchestrated by the National Science Foundation in support of the White House Science Office's statutory, and unwelcome, obligation to produce an *Annual Science and Technology Report to the Congress,* which came out earlier this year. *Emerging Issues,* subtitled, "A Compendium of Working Papers for the National Science Foundation," covers a number of trendy topics, including industrial robotics, engineering education, and genetic engineering (of which it observes that "given the increasingly exciting opportunities the new field presents, one can look to the future with considerable optimism"). Single copies of *Emerging Issues* (77 pages) are available without charge from the Office of Forms and Publications, Room 235, NSF, 1800 G St. Nw., Washington, DC 20550.

Frontrunner Says He's Not Keen for NSF Post

William A. Nierenberg, the most-often-mentioned possibility for succeeding John B. Slaughter as Director of the National Science Foundation, has signaled his Washington admirers that he'd rather not. But, given the persuasive powers that presidents can wield—as Jimmy Carter did with the reluctant Slaughter in 1980—it is by no means certain that Nierenberg is out of danger.

Director of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography since 1965, and an oldtimer on the high-level science-advisory network, Nierenberg is one of the usual suspects whenever a top, full-time science-type job opens in the capital. And such was the case when Slaughter announced in June that he had accepted appointment as Chancellor of the main campus of the University of Maryland, and would leave NSF January 15 (SGR Vol. XII, No. 11).

Nierenberg told SGR that for personal and professional reasons, he'd prefer to stay where he is, and that he'd like to head off further consideration. What he has in mind, apparently, is that Slaughter was happily situated as Provost at Washington State University when the Carter Administration chose him to be the first black to head the Foundation. But it was only after Mr. Carter telephoned the unwilling candidate that Slaughter agreed to take the job.

The selection process is being handled by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, which, like the rest of Washington at summer's end, is on low throttle. A staff man there said the object is to find "a good Reagan scientist of stature." But he declined to say whether a willing recruit with those specifications was on the list of 30 candidates that was prepared for OSTP by the National Science Board, the 25-member policymaking body for NSF (SGR Vol. XII, No. 13).

Meanwhile, the White House has not yet filled eight seats that expired on the Board on May 10. OSTP says that the delay has been caused by the generally sluggish process of security checks, which means that new members are on the way. Delay in filling NSB appointments—which are for six years—are a regular feature of White House indifference to the Board, regardless of which party holds power. In fact, the Board is so accustomed to the problem that the remaining members automatically appoint their expired colleagues as "consultants" to the Board, and the proceedings go on as usual, except that the consultants can't vote.

What makes the current crop of expirations of more than routine interest is that elsewhere in the federal establishment, the Reagan Administration has been using available opportunities to fill high-level advisory bodies with ideological sympathizers. As OSTP Director George A. Keyworth has said on several occasions, we prefer professionally competent people who share our politics.

Those whose terms on the National Science Board expired in May are:

Raymond L. Bisplinghoff, Vice President, Tyco Laboratories

Lloyd M. Cooke, President, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering

Herbert D. Doan, Chairman, Doan Associates, Midland Michigan

John R. Hogness, President, Association of Academic Health Centers

William F. Hueg Jr., Professor of Agronomy, University of Minnesota

Marian E. Koshland, Professor of Bacteriology and Immunology, UC Berkeley

Joseph M. Pettit, President, Georgia Institute of Technology

Alexander Rich, Professor of Biophysics, MIT

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